

8

A
M, Y S T E R Y
O F
G O D L I N E S S E.
A N D N O
C A B A L A;

Or a sincere Account of the
N O N - C O N F O R M I S T S
C O N V E R S A T I O N.

From the 24. of *August* to this time.

For the conviction of Adversaries, the instruction of the ignorant, the confirming of the weak, and the satisfaction of all.

Occasioned by a bitter and malitious Paper
called the

C A B A L A;



L O N D O N,
Printed in the Year, M D C L X I I I.

A
MYSTERY
OF
GODLINESS
AND NO
CABALA

Of a Future Account of the
NON-CONFORMIST
CONVERSATION

From the 2d. of August to this time
for the conversion of Adventurers, the in-
struction of the nation, the conversion of
the world, and the redemption of all
Occasioned by a bitter and malicious Tongue

LONDON
Printed by J. W. in the Strand

MYSTERY

AND NO
C A B A L A!

Or a sincere Account of the
NONCONFORMISTS
CONVERSATION

From the 24th of August to this time

Occasioned by a bitter and malicious Paper, called the

CABALA

When the fears and jealousies of some concerning you are so restless, the malice of others is so implacable, then we suffer not only for what we have done, but for what we may do, and are not only obnoxious

obnoxious to Authority for those miscarriages the world hath seen us guilty of; but unto the Tongues and pens of men; for those likewise the world may imagine us guilty of. To justify his Majesties clemency over us, to give the world a reason of the hope that is in us, to satisfy all sober men, and to promote true peace and settlement of our native Country, we declare.

1. That it is true indeed, we cannot come up in all things to their judgement who are over us, as we know they could not come up to ours, when we were advanced over them; and, as we could not allow them any publick employment or encouragement when they could not comply with us, and our Laws and Constitutions, so we cannot expect any publick employment or encouragement from them, now we dissent from, and cannot close with their Laws and Constitutions. Yet it is true, that we submit patiently to that Authority which we cannot obey cheerfully; really we cannot conform in conscience, and really we cannot resist in conscience; for we must needs be obedient, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake: we suffer, yet we repine not; we grieve, yet we speak no word of Dignities; we dare not curse the King, nor in our thoughts; we desire to fear God, we desire to honour the King; and we would not meddle with them that are given to change, or to Innovations; they of us pay tribute from whom tribute is due, custom from whom custom, and fear from whom fear; and his Majesty hath our hearty prayers day and night before his Throne of Grace for a blessing upon himself and Government; and if we could renounce the whole Covenant, yet would we not renounce that part of it, wherein we have promised, faithfully, really, constantly, in our several vocations, to endeavour, with our Estates and Lives, to preserve and defend the Kings Majesties Person and Authority, that the world may bear witness with our Consciences of our Loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intention to diminish his Majesties just power and greatness: for indeed we whatever the world may think of us, desire to honour his Majesty. For the words sake, by whom kings reign, who by a special providence

dence hath set our gracious King over us. 2. For our own sakes, who though we are not capable of preferment under his Majesty, yet owe unto him our lives, which he hath pardoned, our liberties and estates, which he secures to us, and the protection he affords us: It is a mercy that we may live comfortably as Christians, though we cannot be employed and preferred as Ministers.

2. It is true we have different apprehensions in many things from other men, and in many things we are otherwise minded; but we are resolved, in those things, to which we have already attained, to walk by the same Rule, to mind the same things, and if we cannot be of one mind, we desire to be of one heart; and to preserve unity of affections in our difference of judgement.

We desire heartily, that the small things we differ in should not have so much power to divide us, as the great things we agree in should have to unite; however we beg of the Lord heartily, that we may live peaceably with all men; we desire earnestly to seek truth and peace, and to follow peace and holiness, without which, we think, we cannot see the Lord: we desire to be just in our dealing, harmlesse and innocent in our behaviour and carriage, and to have our conversation honest in the world, that whereas some speak against us as evil doers, they may by our good works, which they shall behold, glorifie God in the day of visitation; and though we are sorry to hear it, that some think it strange that we run not with them to the same excess of Riot, speaking evil of us, yet will we sit still, knowing that they shall give an account unto him who judgeth righteous judgement.

3. Without all dangerous, offensive, or suspicious designs or conspirings, which we abhor, have, we since the twenty four of August, held up our private Devotions in the Apostles Doctrine, and fellowship, and breaking bread from house to house, and in prayers, loving as brethren; as these our Meetings we plot nothing but the saving of souls, comforting the weak, reclaiming the erroneous, instructing the ignorant, building poor souls up in their faith, as helpers of their

(C.)
their joy, for the perfecting of the Saints, the work of the Ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ, and helping our brethren in the public ministry; who since our withdrawing have a great burden lying upon them; some may preach Christ out of envy, some out of discontent, but Christ is preached, and we dare boldly say, nothing but Christ crucified is preached among us: wherefore we rejoyce, and we hope they rejoyce too; ever since we hope without offence we have preached the Word, and have been instant in season and out of season, reprovng, rebuking, and exhorting with all long-suffering and doctrine: here have we no thoughts of our King and Countrey, but thoughts of peace; no words of either but serious Exhortations to obedience under the one, and fervent prayers for the peace and prosperity of the other: we are indeed to converse profitably, to improve our time and opportunities usefully, to provoke one another to love and to good works. In obedience to his Majesties Laws for peace and order, we have no seditious Conventicles; in compliance with his Majesties good inclination, for serious holinesse, for sobre friendship we converse with one another lovingly, we meet at one anothers habitation friendly and neighbourly, we open our doubts one to another sincerely, and endeavour to resolve one another satisfactorily; we pray unanimously, one reads, another openeth what is read, and presseth home what is so opened; and to wick prayers, and a hymn, and all else in suchment we dismiss one another; and take our leave as the Prophets speak, two or three, and the others judge if any thing be revealed unto another that is not by the first holdeth his peace, for we all prophesy one by one, as all may teach, and all may be comforted (but we must needs say) whatsoever is suggested to the contrary, that among us the spirit of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets; for we know, that God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the Churches of the Saints; we hope there is no knave of the English genus of Friendship and good nature abroad in the world, that none will descend us, either for families meetings, which are neighbourly;

hourly, or for making good use of those meetings which is Christian: Indeed we were unsufferable, if we set up private meetings in opposition to publick Assemblies; but its a common observation by this time, that we never go together privately the same hour that others meet publickly; and indeed we are glad when they say unto us, *Let us go up to the House of God.* One thing we have desired of the Lord, that while we seek after, that we may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of our lives, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple. And its seldom that we escape any opportunities of joyning with the publick Assemblies, for though we cannot administer in the Church, yet we cannot separate from the Church: we would not partake with the Churches sins, least we be defiled; we would not remove from the Church, least we be nothing: And indeed we desire only in private to sit home upon our hearts what we have gained in publick; we would second the Ministers at home, whom we cannot assist abroad: Its true, they of us that fear the Lord, speak often one to another, but we dare not speak any thing that is amiss; for we know the Lord hearkeneth and heareth us, and a Book of Remembrance is written before, for them that fear the Lord, and think upon his Name.

4. Forasmuch as there is no well-affected Christian that is not deeply sensible of the unsettledness, division, animosities, profaneness, decay of Trade, and other calamities, whereby our Native Country is exposed to the pity of Neighbours, and the scorn and insultation of Enemies; we do effectually endeavour to work our hearts to a sound humiliation for our own sins, which have contributed too much to the common calamities, seeing we are so unhappy as to add to the measure of publick provocation, we cannot but be so compassionate, as to endeavour to add to the measure of publick prayer, humiliations and intercessions.

5. To prevail with God the more effectually, we zealously stir up our Neighbours and Friends to be passionately affected with the present Estate of the Churches and Servants of Christ, that as they helped on their ministers by their
sins;

sins, so they may assist in their recovery, by their tears, sighs and prayers.

6. We endeavour by all means to gain just notice, and a true account of the estate of our Native Country; that as the men of *Issachar*, we may be men understanding the times, and knowing what *Israel* ought to do; and herein we observe: First, our sins we allow, to the great dishonor of the Majesty of the holy God we serve, and the purity of the holy Gospel we profess: And secondly, the judgements we lye under, by reason of these sins; our great design is to root up the greatest evil, that is Sin, and draw near the highest good, that is God; that he would take delight in us to do us good, and would receive us graciously, and love us freely.

7. We deeply lay to heart, and secretly mourn for the sins of the people, representing them to our thoughts in their heinous nature and circumstances, humbly entreating the Lord for their serious repentance of them, and earnestly deprecating the judgements provoked by them; so that we lay together both the evils we feel, and those we have too just cause to fear, and in a due sense of both, we desire to humble our selves, and others, under the mighty hand of God.

8. And therefore whensoever we have an opportunity to speak from God to his people in the publick Assemblies; we desire to speak a present truth, and to lay open and bewail the sins of the time, and to awake the people with all zealous exhortation to a lively and just sorrow for all the overflowings of wickedness, and to a vehement and godly striving against the stream thereof by their prayers and utmost endeavours, day and night constantly pouring out their hearts in strong cries and fervent prayer to our God, that he will be pleased to visit us in mercy and compassion, and cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us.

9. And however, privately we set apart one day at least in every week for this holy end and purpose, wherein we humble our selves in private fasting and prayer, till it please our God to return to his in his wonted pity and compassion,

on, and put an end to our sins and miseries, recovering us to that first state of Innocence, peace and plenty, which we were happy in before our late miscarriages.

10. We do restrain our wonted pleasure, not allowing the liberty of that mirth and lawful refreshment which we might formerly make use of, while the hand of God lieth thus heavily upon us.

11. We do not allow our selves the neglect of any means of prayer, reading, meditation and conference, whereby the peace and welfare of this Church and State may be procured and maintained, and shall carefully avoid all words and actions, ways and means, which may at all tend to the widening of the unhappy breaches, and the encreasing the many and woful differences among us, *seeking peace, and ensuing it*, studying now in our leisure time, to look into the bottom of Controversies, that we may bring differences to as narrow a compass as we can, beget a mutual good understanding and satisfaction among sober men, clearing up things as far as lieth in our power for the reuniting of all honest and faithful hearts in a firm concord of Christian love, endeavouring to discover and defeat all the devices and machinations of Satan, and his Engines, against the peace and welfare of the Church in all parts of the world, especially in these wherein we are interested.

12. And particularly *considering our selves*, our own miscarriages and infirmities, we shall not as afore fly out upon the weakness, defects, or excesses of our Fathers or Brethren, aggravating the blame of those their actions or Opinions, which may be capable of a gentler or milder construction, resolving to look as charitably upon all their proceedings, who are otherwise minded in matters of an inferiour Nature, bending our whole endeavours against known sin, and open profaneness, the great Enemies of our peace and settlement: As we have preached, so we desire to live, that charity that suffereth long, and is kind, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

13. And to that purpose we have first of all laid aside all our lesser Opinions among our selves, and our little separations and divisions, and resolvedly knis our selves together in an entire affection one to another, that by this all men may know that we are *Christ's Disciples, because we love one another*, and are ready to shew all mutual respects of Christian love, and observance to each other upon all occasion loving as Brethren: As likewise we shall in all meekness of heart lovingly converse with, and kindly affectionate, and respectful towards all our Fathers and Brethren in their places, living without offence, and blameless.

14. We mourn, but not as men without hope; that our gracious God will find out a way to have mercy upon us, and to chear up his countenance towards all his Chosen Ones, wiping (as that holy Bishop said) *all tears from their eyes, and all spots from their faces*, and answering the holy desires of their hearts, in shewing them *Sion in perfect beauty*, and that not by overturning any part of the Government, but by opening our hearts to see our groans, and close one with another, by turning the heart of *the Father towards the Child, and of the Child towards the Father; that God come and smite the earth with a tempest*, and bring forth all life.

15. In the mean time we possess our Souls in patience, and we keep silence before God, waiting upon him that hideth his face from Jacob; for his Spirit of love, unity, peace, and concord, resolving to continue thus doing, till we receive an answer from heaven.

16. It is true, there are many of us whose bodies will not bear that austerity of fasting and humillation which our cause may require, yet they that cannot fast do pray, and they that cannot spare a day in seven, can spare one in twelve, and make up the rest in frequent and fervent exertions.

17. Whereas some have pretended that we set up a Government within a Government, and that we have an Authority among our selves, we must let the world know we are all equal, and we have no formality or Ceremony among us, but a free and voluntary entrance, left open for all.

all comes into this strict course of Christian Austerity, without any noise, without the required notice of any, but God and their own conscience, that all may well know and see, that there is no design than, merely Spiritual, aiming at nothing but Religious Transactions, between God and our own Souls; and consisting in the performance of the unquestionable exercises of Pious and holy Devotion.

18. Since we have been incapable of speaking to the people the things that are of everlasting concernment, we have recommended to them the writings of good men, pious and peaceable, who being *dead yet speak*, and poor men we know may read a good book, when they cannot hear a good man; and we our selves teach them from house to house, with tears day and night, as the Apostles did, leaving with them such books as Mr. *Baxters Call*, his *Now or Never*, his *Directions for Peace of Conscience*, his *Saints Everlasting Rest*, Mr. *Belton*, Dr. *Sibbs*, Mr. *Perkins*, Mr. *Did*, and Dr. *Preston*.

19. We settle mens judgements upon most firm and solid principles, leading to peace and holiness, leading them through that safe and middle way that is equally distant from all the extremes men have run into in their hearts about some points of Religion, as particularly in the points now in difference among us, we teach our people, that though we cannot conform to the Church without sin, yet they cannot separate from it without sin; we cannot administer according to the prescribed form, but we and they can hear according to it; we must joyn with the Church in our duties, though we are not guilty of her infirmities; we teach them that it is one thing to hold communion with a Church that is under some miscarriages, and another thing to assist those miscarriages; what we chiefly insist on, are things much composing and agreeing with the spirit of the Scriptures, and things that are most proper to build men up in their most holy Faith, and to promote the power of godliness in their hearts and lives.

20. As time we desire to settle our peoples hearts upon all occasions, but always offering them such things as tend

to peace and quietness; and godliness of living; dealing as faithfully with them, as those who must give an account; and if therefore we have any interest with them, we improve for God our Sovereign, and the Church of Christ, for whose distressed members we sometimes solicit them with success; and find them willing above their strength and ability; and we hope the Lord will not forget their work and labour of love; and yet we desire not to wrong any Minister in his place, for indeed we stated the point of Ministers maintenance upon such grounds, that we are persuaded no sober Christian, with whom we have any interest, will withdraw any thing that is due from any man that labours in the Word and Doctrine, and watches for their Souls: And though we are otherwise represented, yet our great endeavour is, by a discreet interposition to allay and fix the people to a due temperament (gently guiding some mens well-meaning zeal by such rules of moderation, as are best to restore and preserve the health and peace of this Church and Kingdome, much pleasing our selves in that good and firm understanding which would thence grow between this most Excellent Majesty and his good people, all jealousies being laid aside, our own and our Posterities Interest lay before us many strong obligations to seek and preserve the peace and welfare of the Land of our Nativity; the offence which some mens dangerous meddling and over-basis interpositions have contracted upon our profession; we have resolved to expiate by such moderations for the future, as might not only check the excesses of our practise, but of our Opinions too, women having a greater kindness for peace and settlement preserved in truth, unity and order, than our selves who in most concerns, whether we consider our consciences, gallings or interests, acknowledging that nothing underlines so much in our Authority and Calling as those dangerous dissensions wherein the people learn to shake off both.

As for the Ministry of our Church Episcopacy now established, so far as it is established by the Lord, yet we would submit to it as to a thing Ordained of man for the Lords sake, whether

whether to the King as Supreme, or to those who are sent by him, whose great charges and care is like enough to betray them to some errors, and many enemies: whereof they cannot but conceive good store; while so to content and to advise, they provoke that envy which improved to a popular odium, is able to overcast the highest Merit and Integrity: wherefore the Bishops have our prayers, pity, and assistance; and although we cannot in our judgement approve all that they do, driven in many respects by the terror of the people and unpopularity of their actions, yet we allow not that their persons or Government should be exposed to the malapertness of the loose and licentious multitude, who take a bold liberty to despise *Derivatives*, and to speak evil of *Derivatives*, whereas we have always taught that men should cheerfully submit to the Authority, when they cannot in Conscience allow all the practices of those that are over them in the Lord: And yet we never met with a more perplexed controversy of affairs, then the late business of Bishops, when between our unadvisedness in Conscience under that Government, and the manifest necessity if we shaked off that of being under none, we run headlong to that which we thought more expedient, rather then we should suffer some inconvenience under that which we well regulated we must always approve, as just, considering the humour of some particular men before the reasons of the Christian World: Well experience hath taught us, that we had better live where nothing is lawful, then where all things are so, that Anarchy is the greatest oppression, licentiousness the greatest grievance, and an unbounded liberty the greatest slavery to any Christian. And the *Agnom* A. 1. c. 2. Indeed we allow it for such Christians who have not their hearts enlarged with an ability to express their own wants and desires, both lawful and convenient to help themselves in prayer, the use of a prescribed form, wherein they may have their own case and condition more purely and affectionately, then they are able to express themselves; and if the use of such a form do prove a means

to warm the affections, and enkindle their grace, we looking not upon it as any quenching of the Spirit, it being not in our apprehension essential to the nature of prayer, that it be either read, or rehearsed by memory, or by immediate suggestion, but rather that it be delivered out of the book, or out of the heart, with understanding and sensible affections, with humility and confidence, and an inward sense of our condition; nor is there any great difference betwixt repeating by memory, and reading out of a book, the memory being but a kind of invisible book for the register of our thoughts, though in this case it should be especially remembered, that in the use of such prescript forms, so which a man hath been accustomed, he ought to be narrowly watchful over his own heart, for fear of that its service should be merely which in such cases we are more especially exposed unto; but yet for any one to transcend these bounds with his Prayer-book, as to go no further, this were still to remain in his slavery, and never grow in grace or gifts; and within its very bars for a man to find a prescribed form that may suit with our several emergencies, which were indeed we do not cry our hearts to precisely to any particular form of words, though of our own composing, and lead to our hearts, but that we may ascend onwards, according as our emergent occasions or some new affection suggested shall require. Sometimes we feel such a sense of our own weakness, and need of gracious aid, that we are ready; And in this case we suffer no doubt to be encouraged or conformed to any form, but take our liberty to express more freely, according to the use of our own hearts.

23. Amongst all the stratagems of Satan whereby he would ensnare Religion, and pervert the souls of men, though there can be any more dangerous, yet there was never any more unhappily successful than the falling and the rising of a new zeal. In the world, that Religion in the height and exaltation of it, hath been to our vermore; and that to be through success, a sincere and zealous Christian, is to be dangerous to the State: We

23. Amongst all the fragments of Satan's empire, he would add the Religion, and pervert the souls of men, though they can form any more unreasonable, yet there was never any more happily successful, than the falling and the rising of a false cause in the world, that Religion, the highest exaltation of it, has been to God, vermore; and that to men, through false, a success and honour; Christian, it is dangerous to the State: We there-

therefore, as Ministers of this Religion, are bold in the evidence & truth of the Gospel; to say that (whatever the men of the world judge of us) we profess Christian Religion in so harmless and innocent a way; that we have studied and endeavoured to state the Rights of Civil Government upon the clearest and firmest principles, to secure them by the most powerful obligation, and to urge them upon men by the most efficacious motives of rewards and punishment in the world: And we profess sincerely, that we look upon our late miscarriages as most unhappy scandals to our Religion, and those engaged in them so for us, to persist still as Enemies to the Cross of Christ, and men born to bring our holy Christian profession into jealousy, suspicion, and disgrace with the powers of the earth, and to stir up the Kings of the earth to stand up, and the Rulers to take counsel together against the Lord; and against his Christ, that they should break their bonds in sunder, and cast their cords from them: We are so sensible of the original and institution of Government, of the end and use of it, in respect of good and evil men, and thereof the necessity of subjection for *Conscience* sake, and of the sin and danger of resisting an Ordinance of God; considering that they who resist privately or openly by word or deed, resist to their own damnation; that we cannot allow any person upon any pretence whatsoever, in any manner whatsoever, to vilify, deride, murmur against, disparage, undermine, or oppose Lawful Authority that is set over him, we say upon any pretence whatsoever, either 1. In respect of the person governing, as Error, Heresy, Idolatry, harsh Administration, or the like, in which cases the servants of God in all Ages had no other remedy but patience, and prayer, and crying mightily to the Lord, 1 Sam. 8. 9, 11, 12, 13. as they did under *Tiberius*, *Caligula*, *Claudius* and *Nero*, those Monsters of mankind. Or 2. In respect of the persons governed, be they never so holy feeling, but of men, yet God and Man in this case obeyed unto the death. 3. In respect of any causes whatsoever, though it be Religion, whereof we conceive the Magistrate ought to have the greatest care, so that we are persuaded in our *Conscience*, that to them who have embraced

Embraced Christianity in the true and genuine spirit of it, as we hope we have all done; and to those who without vile affections, and carnal interests, shall apply themselves to know the mind of God delivered in Scripture: As we hope we do with peaceable submission, and patience, is a clear duty under any Government; so that though the Spirit of the Ruler be stirred against them, yet they cannot stir out of their place.

24. And as we are thus justly affected to Sovereignty, knowing by whom the powers are ordained, as we dare not curse the King in our heart, or revile the Ruler of the people, much less slander the footsteps of Gods Anointed; as we submit for conscience sake to every Ordinance of God; yea to every Ordinance of man for the Lords sake, not daring to disobey in regard of the Oath of God; and pay custome where custome, and tribute where tribute. So indeed whatever apprehensions men have of us abroad in the world, we desire to fill up every relation conscionably and faithfully according to the Rule; and as men that desire to approve our selves to God and men, as to our calling, we desire to be faithful, neither suppressing nor corrupting the truth, to take heed to our selves, and to all the flock of God, over which the holy Ghost hath made us overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood: We desire to speak from the heart to the heart, so as we feel in our selves what we speak to others, that we may serve God with our spirit in the Gospel of his Son, that we may save our selves and those that hear us; that we may walk from love to God, to the glory of God, and the salvation of our souls, as able, faithful, resolute, industrious in preparing for, and exercising of our Ministry, and as compassionate of souls, preaching the Word purely, plainly, undecently, powerfully and sincerely, administering the Sacraments carefully, instructing our Flocks, advising, admonishing, and comforting, them as we see occasion; being good examples to Believers, in words, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, and waiting upon God for increase: We desire to be neither too austere in our strictness, nor too cheap in our sociableness, but carrying so even a hand,

hand; that our discreet affableness may be free from con-tempe, and that we may win our people with a loving conversation; as secondly to our Relation, first to our Families, we desire to be the mouth of our people to God by constant prayers, and the mouth of God to our people by wholesome Instructions; and holy Admonitions, loving, tender, and careful of our nearest Relations, devoting them to Gods service, and committing them to his care, providing yet for them honest things in the sight of men, and going before them in good examples of piety and holy conversation, and so over-looking them, as they that have more than meer bodies committed to our charge: We desire to be familiar, meek, humble, and courteous towards all, and helpful one way or other to our neighbour, as they that think our selves born to do good, maintaining peace and love at home and abroad.

25. We think we have fully informed our selves in all the necessary points of Religion; and we are so firmly grounded in those fundamental and saving truths, that we will not be carried about with every wind of doctrine; as for circumstances, we neither neglect them, nor yet too eagerly pursue after them; we receive nothing in Religion upon trust: nor dare we absolutely follow any guide, but such as we are sure cannot erre; we have some hours for speculation, but our Life is to reduce knowledge to practice, and so much we think we know, as we can live; where we are convinced we can submit, where we must dissent we can be silent, and where we dissent from the Church, we desire to examine thoroughly whether we are deceived; we keep close to those truths which do most promote the glory and grace of God, the reformation of men, and the salvation of souls: *Whosoever therefore by pride, or faction, or schisme, or ambition, or novel fancies, and arrogances, or ignorance, or sedition, or popularity; or vain-glory, or envy or discontent, or correspondence, or any other carnal reason shall cause divisions or offences by teaching any other doctrine than what we have received, we look not upon him as the Servant of Christ.*

26. We desire we may not be judged for our austere conver-

conversation and strict life; for we desire, so to speak, and
 so to do, as they that shall be judged by the Law of Liberty:
 We would our discourse were grave, discreet, pertinent,
 free from vanity, free from offence: We allow our selves no
 corrupt or unflavoury communication; in worldly affairs
 we desire nothing may fall from us but what is reasonable
 and well advised; in spiritual, such as may minister grace
 to the hearers, and such as is sparing and charitable, allow-
 ing neither detraction nor censure; not meddling with any
 matters of State, but keeping our selves within compasse,
 only desiring to understand the times, that we might know
 what *Israel* ought to do: In word and actions we desire to
 walk circumspectly, to avoid all appearances of evil; to
 walk as in sincerity, as in truth, and as in the sight of God;
 exercising our selves to a good Conscience, void of offence
 towards God and towards men; willing in all things to
 live honestly, and endeavouring to live without rebuke in
 the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; and if
 we are more earnest and serious then ordinarily, you must
 know, that we are sensible *how short time is, what eternity is,*
 and *what are our immortal souls,* and *what that God is with*
whom we have to do. Our recreation we desire may be safe,
 inoffensive and moderate in time and measure, such as may
 refresh a tired body and mind, and not effeminate or de-
 bauch them; we would indeed rejoyce, as if we rejoyced not.
 We allow our selves so far creature-enjoyments, as nature
 requires, and grace moderates, and our God blesteth: we
 redeem our time, considering it is not our own improving it
 to our best advantage; we know a day or a night well
 spent, makes way for Eternity. We desire to be very obser-
 vant of our outward conversation, but we look chiefly at
 our inward frame; we live by the precepts, we live upon the
 promises, we affect not singularity, we aim at sincerity; our
 Habits commend us not to God, yet by our Habits we
 would not give offence unto men; our devotion we desire
 may be with fear and reverence on the one hand, and with
 Faith and sincerity on the other; we watch unto prayer,
 and we watch after prayer; and indeed we desire always

to watch and be sober, fearing in adversity, and rejoicing in tribulation, knowing that tribulation provoketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed.

27. Our indeavours to keep a good understanding at Court by our Friends and Brethren, is loaded by our enemies (for so some would be still, notwithstanding his Majesties endeavours for pacification) with all the obloquies and exasperations imaginable, and looked upon by some indifferent men with jealousies and fears; but these men know not the just motives and pregnant grounds with which we think our selves furnished for those undertakings, God knows it is not any interest or party we desire to serve there, but we pursue the peace and good of the Kingdom, and endeavour to prevent future dangers, which we may foresee will in all likelihood follow some mens activity (if not restrained) by a moderate Interest; not as if we would stop the course of Law, or weaken Authority, but that we desire heartily, as many honourable Persons do, with his Majesty and his Father of blessed memory, *That no Party or Interest be exasperated* (and the multitude are easier exasperated then appeased) by craftinesse, and asperity of some mens passions, humours or private opinions; grounded only upon differences in lesser matters, which are but the skirts and suburbs of Religion; whereas (as his late Majesty of renowned Memory observed, as an Angel of God) *a charitable connivance and Christian toleration of sin dissipates their strength, whom rougher opposition fortifies, and puts the despised and oppressed party into such combinations as may most enable them, yet a full revenge on those they count their persecutors, who are commonly assisted with that vulgar commiseration, which attends all that are said to suffer under the notions of Religion.*

Indeed we only desire (what that famous Prince wished) viz. *That solid piety, and those fundamental truths (which men's both hearts and lives of men) be kept up and encouraged with equal justice and impartial favour; and that the outward circumstances and formalities of Religion be not all, or the best encouragement, of learning, industry and piety, but that with*

an equal eye and impartial hand favours and rewards be distributed among all men, as they are found, for their real goodness, both in ability and fidelity worthy and capable of them: This, saith that excellent Prince, will be sure to gain the hearts of the most, and the best too, who though they be not good themselves, yet are glad to see the sterner ways of virtue at any time sweetned by temporal rewards.

And though it be suggested, that we are not to be trusted about his Majesty, although we can make it appear, that since his Majesty was restored we have passed three years with so much Innocence, and so little compliance with any Interest or Faction, that not one publick action we did since, but is capable of a fair and equitable plea; yet since an Act of Indemnity and Religion is passed, we think it our duty so far to comply with his Majesties Intention in granting that Act, as not to mention any thing, how defensible soever, which he hath commanded should be utterly forgotten, but to give our present sense of things, we can sincerely profess, that we have not only a Loyal, but a most affectionate esteem for his Majesties Person and Government; for since, besides the general obligation of Subjects, we are bound by our Religion to prize gratitude above all things, we could not be just, should we not most earnestly desire the happiness of that Prince, unto whose single endeavours we owe all our Liberty; for we all acknowledge, that his Majesties personal and passionate Interposings did confirm our Indemnity, and his most pious and unequalled *Dedication* have satisfactorily evidenced, that he is not unwilling to indulge the utmost extent of sober and Christian Liberty, which, as we have elsewhere professed, are expressions of so much goodness in the midst of so great power, and after so many provocations, that he hath not the heart of a man, much less of a Christian, that hath not a due sense of them; we are sure they have so thoroughly possessed us, that if in any publick action of ours there be any Instance that can be wrested to the disparagement of his Majesties Royal Authority and Government, we intreat the world to take notice, that we do hereby utterly disown it, as being directly contrary to our professed Principles, which lead us to no one point

point of outward practice more strictly and powerfully than an exact and punctual obedience to his Majesties Commands, and a chearful submission to his Authority. And once for all, now it hath pleased his Majesty so to enjoyn an outward conformity, to which we cannot in all things subscribe, we are resolved, the Lord assisting us, to submit with chearfulness, and to suffer with silence; for as there is an active disobedience, which is to resist, so there is a passive disobedience, that is, to repine, neither of which can we by any means approve of; since whatever we cannot conscientiously do, we think our selves obliged to suffer for, with as much joy, and with as little resistance, as if any other act of obedience were called for from us. We may perhaps be too partial to our selves; but certainly in general we may pronounce, that whoever is of this temper, whatever his judgement be, as touching things indifferent in their own nature, yet he cannot be supposed incompatible with wayes of publick safety. And over and above all, we are not capable of being dangerous to this Government, but by our Representatives in Parliament, who are now men of such unpotted integrity towards his Majesties Person and Government, that it is a wonder if malice it self can find the least suspicion of danger.

28. It is true (as some say) that by our diligence, good husbandry, and the blessing of God upon our endeavours; we have got among us a considerable part of the treasure of this Land; for we are a people that improve our time, and follow our business, as whose strict profession forbids us those excesses which swallow up other mens time and estates; Hounds, Hawks, Games, Wine, Women, Playes, and other vanities; have neither our thoughts nor our purses, which we reserve for higher advantage, which we constantly watch, and as constantly meet with (so great an advantage hath the sober against the intemperate) yet out of what we have, are we ready upon all occasions to assist his Majesty, and support his Government; yea if as some would have, it should please his Majesty to impose upon us a Levy for our former miscarriages, his Indulgence to us, and for

the peace and tranquillity we enjoy under him, it should be parted with as chearfully as ever we parted with money in the heat of the late trouble; neither would we so anxiously look upon what is gone of our estate, as we would thankfully take notice of what remains. It is true, we have got estates some of us in the late troubles, and now we have places about the King, and indeed we know not how to expiate former transgression against his late Majesty, but by endeavouring to be as capable as we can to serve his Son: Among our many failings we hoped this would have been none, that we used all means to get into his Majesties service, no place escaping us that could be had for love or money; as we have done amisse, not out of malice, but misinformation, or misapprehension of things, so we hope none shall be more loyal and faithful then we, who, sensible of our errors and our injuries, do feel in our own souls most vehement motives to repentance, and earnest desires to make some reparations for former defects.

For his Majesties and his Fathers faithful Souldiers and Subjects, who out of conscience sunk in the same ruine with their Liege, Lord and Sovereign, we declare, upon all occasions, when we are called to it, that we think it necessary for publick settlement, that they should be provided for as may be just and expedient; such valour and gallantry we confesse they have shewed, that we heartily wish we may never want such men to serve our Sovereign, to maintain his Laws and Kingdomes in such a peace, as wherein they may enjoy their share and proportion as much as any men; and so wish withall, that we did close so unanimously in one common subjection, that there were no note of distinction left, and no quarrel remain but this one, *viz. who should be most Loyal and faithful*: we would have our fellow Subjects live as strictly and as warily as we do, and they will see, the very money that is spent upon their vanities would procure them places as well as ours does us: and as for such of them as the iniquity of the times, or their own faults have made poor; our very excesses would support them; and what we throw away idly would relieve them: we are ready to join
in

in any expedient that may accomodate all grievances, that if it be possible we may have no more complaining in our streets. In a word, those that are well inclined on all sides are ready to agree, but that there are some crafty and subtle men on both sides; that would keep our distances and animosities to serve their private ends, which they propose sometimes to themselves out of the publick ruine, aggravating all things with the most odious circumstances, and endeavouring to inflame the vulgar to a temper incapable of restraint or Government, that now we are at such a distance, we look upon it as no lesse a providence, that God keeps the people within the bound of Law, and the reverence of Authority, then that he keeps the Sea within its channel, and the waters within their banks. And thus indeed since our seclusion have we endeavoured to approve our selves Gods faithful Children and Servants by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yes true.

29. The great discourse of the Nation at this time is their Taxations, from which some would perfwade the world we under our present discontent make some advantage, in reference to which our sense hath been always this: 1. That all our payments are our advantage, we allow his Majesty a part of our Estate, to secure the whole; we support his Government, he protects our lives and estates from that rage and rapine which in a few daies may destroy the industry of many years; we teach men constantly not to be so impertinent, as to complain of any common charge or burthen which seems necessary to the present policy; under which we may have leave to live peaceable and quiet lives; in all godliness and honesty; no safety to us without the restraint of other mens lust and violence, and no restraint, without a Government that is able to raise a constant guard to every man that would live securely under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-tree.

We know that there are four pillars of Government and Order. 1. Religion, that setteth the hearts of men. 2. Justice, that ordereth their lives. 3. Counsel, that may apply the

the Rules of Justice and Religion to particular occasions.
 4. Treasure, which last is so necessary, that without it Officers will be corrupted, Counsels betrayed, Armies ill paid and disciplined, Trade obstructed, and a poor Nation will be open to the dangerous attempts of an untoward people at home, and the unneighborly encroachments of potent Princes abroad. 1. All payments are of our own imposing, by our consent in Parliament. 3. Our late miscarriages occasion our present grievance. 4. Yet we are not now under the eighth part of former payments: We tell our people, that our King affords us Christian protection, and therefore we may very well allow him dutiful assistance; by our lives, estates and prayers.

30. Here we thought to have concluded, but that there remains two particulars more, whereof we think fit to give an account, and then we shall set a period to this importunity.

The first is this; viz. Why we have been so importunate, both a little before the 24 of August, and ever since, against Popery.

Ans. As true, that we had verily thought Popery had rendered it self justly odious, by its own abominations in doctrine, worship, and bloody slaughter, and that in these days of light and knowledge, to imagine a possibility of its return upon the Protestant Churches, (which yet hath been the Opinion of divers eminent for Learning and Godliness among us) was groundless fear, where no fear was; yet really considering 1. The vast numbers of Popish Missions, Priests and Jesuits that swarm among us, English Colleges, as we are certified, being much emptied by the sending of multitudes sent thither, whose ways are subtil and close, whose industry is indefatigable, whose influence and efficacy upon all sorts of persons is powerful, whose support from abroad is past finding out. 2. The printing and vending so many English Popish books, which considering the Apostasie of some, the indifference of others, distracted by our unhappy divisions, cannot speak less than a great inclination to a revolt to Popery. 3. The tolera-

toleration of Popery publicly by them pleaded for. 4. The Jesuites design and models of seducing *England to Rome* obedience, followed and promoted by many deluded Protestants. 5. The union of foreign Popish power, which how soon the Court of *Rome* (being ever vigilant to improve such occasions for the propagation of its own greatness) may make use of, for the extirpation of the Protestant Religion; we need not divine. 6. The whole body of Popery published by *Sectaries*, especially *Quakers*; upon these considerations we were awakened, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints; having not the least thought of any dangerous intimations to the people, as if our Governours or Government (both which we think in our consciences clear in that matter) had any inclinations for, or were to give any countenance to that Mystery of Iniquity: And it was therefore that we recommend to our beloved Congregations: 1. The love of the truth in sincerity. 2. Serious endeavours to heal the sad breaches and divisions which are among us. 3. To read good books. 4. To make Conscience of all Family duties. 5. To attend on publick Ordinances. 6. To be well grounded in the principles of Religion, and to watch over their hearts.

2. It was given out, that we the dissembling Parry had made an accomodation among our selves, the naked truth whereof is this; indeed we have endeavoured to follow the things that make for peace, which we have reduced to these heads following.

1. Præct with God; if our ways please the Lord, our Enemies will be at peace with us.

2. Of Nature its one common grace; wrought in us by one Spirit; if we had all one new Nature, we should have all one mind.

3. Of Judgement; 1. In principles of Doctrine which we draw up, which are 1. Few. 2. Plain. 3. Weighty. 4. Clear. 5. Subservient to godliness. 6. Universally professed.

2. Principles of obedience of Worship, of government contained in the ten Commandments, the Lords Prayer, the Belief, and the Scripture.

3. Of

3. Of affections; one heart where there cannot be one mind, kindly affectionate one to another, loving as Brethren.

4. Of ends; they that agree in the end, will in time agree in the means.

2. Unity; and that Scripture.

3. Uniformity; that everything be done according to Scripture, decency and order; that we be one of one way, and of one mind, and walk by the same Rule.

4. Order; none stirring out of his place, all studying to be quiet, and to follow their own business peaceably and obediently, knowing them that rule over them.

5. The power of Grace and Religion, which is a wisdom from above; first pure, then peaceable, and the power of Religion makes for peace. 1. By subduing lusts, whence come worse. 2. By working that love that beareth all things, &c. 1 Cor. 13. 3. By enlightening the mind; difference come from ignorance, if we have grace to practise what we know, God will reveal other things in due time, and we shall all agree. 4. By subduing that covetousness, ambition, pride, envy, &c. that disturb the world. 5. The power of Grace in us will convince all men, that God is in us of a truth, and so will pacifie the world.

The 6th thing that makes for peace, a great care of weak and wilful ignorance, which is lazy, and will not search for truth; bashful, and is ashamed to do it; sullen, and will not understand.

7. Take care of interest private or publick; keep up a frame of spirit that looks rather what is just, necessary and true, then what is expedient and useful.

8. Be humble and teachable; neither proud nor self-conceited pertinacy, nor think seriously on this obvious truth, a man may erre: put on meekness and long-suffering.

9. Take care of respect of persons, and of prejudice.

10. Be deliberate and sober, proving all things.

11. Have a zeal always guided by knowledge.

12. Let nothing be done through strife, or vain-glory.

13. Pru-

13. Prudently suspend your judgement and practise, and if you have faith, have it to thy self.

14. All lawful contention and forbearance one with another, forbearing and receiving one another, and bearing one anothers burden.

15. Wait by prayer on the God of peace, for your selves; for your Ministers, for your Magistrates.

16. Mark them that cause divisions, and avoid them.

17. Give up your selves to your faithful Ministers, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

18. Be wise unto sobriety, and rather believe then dispute, avoiding all unnecessary questions.

19. Take care of an Innovating Spirit, stand in the way, ask which is the good way, and walk therein, and you will find rest for your Souls.

20. Consider one another, so as to provoke one another to love, and to good works.

21. Let the spirits of the Prophets be subject to the Prophets.

22. Correct and keep down the rising of our knowledge with humility in our selves, and charity towards others.

23. So long as there is found agreement in fundamental truths, and in the simplicity of the Gospel, silence all disputes, in matters merely notional and curious, which have no necessary influence into faith and godly living.

24. Let there be a joynt obedience to the truths wherein all agree, and pursuance of the end which all profess, whereunto we have already attained; let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same things, *Phil. 3. 16.*

25. Out of a serious and single-hearted love of truth, let us address our selves to the search of holy Scriptures.

26. A mutual and brotherly love, which is a very great means to work upon the judgements of one another, and to take off all impediments as usually arise from personal prejudice in disquisition of truth.

27. Keep your selves to the Analogy of faith, the form of sound words:

28. Labour against the inward grounds of contention, as
E pride,

pride, self-love, envy, malice and covetousness, and endeavour after a meek, charitable, yielding, and submissive disposition of heart and frame of spirit, that they let fall private interests for the publick.

29. Meet and converse together for a mutual good, understanding of one another.

30. Wait upon God for further illumination in all truth.

31. Let the grounds of Religion be laid by Catechising.

32. Suppress the beginning of religious debates, by a fair and amicable communication among your selves.

Thus we have given a sincere account of our selves, which we beseech the Lord to bless, to confirm the weak, to direct the doubtful, to convince gain-sayers, and to gain peaceable and sober men favour with God and men.

22. Consider and let down the ring of our knowledge with humility in our selves, and charity toward others.

23. So long as there is sound agreement in fundamental points, and in the Catechising of the Catechists, let us

spoke, in matters merely noddy, and curious, which have no necessary influence into faith and godly living.

24. Let there be a joint obedience to the things wherein all agree, and pursuance of the end which all profess, whereunto we have already attained; let us walk by the same

rule, let us mind the same things, Rom. 7. 16.

25. Ours is a serious and single-hearted love of truth, let us watch our selves to the search of holy Scriptures.

26. A mutual and brotherly love, which is a very great means to work upon the judgments of one another, and to take off all impediments as usually arise from personal

prejudice in distinction of truth.

27. Keep your selves to the Analogy of faith, the sense of sound words.

28. Labour to still the inward motions of concupiscence, as

SOLEMN VOW

That we have taken.

VVE the Ministers of the Gospel, in the Kingdomes of England, Scotland, and Ireland, living under one King, and being of one Reformed Religion, having before our eyes the glory of God, and the advancement of the Kingdome of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the honour and happiness of the Kings Majesty, and his Posterity, and the true publick liberty, safety, and peace of the Kingdomes wherein every ones private condition is included, and calling to mind the treacherous and bloody Plots, Conspiracies, Attempts, and practises of the Enemies of God against the true Religion, and Professors thereof in all places, especially in these three Kingdomes, ever since the Reformation of Religion, and how much their rage, power, and presumption are of late, and at this time encreased and exercised; whereof the deplorable estate of the Church and Kingdome of Ireland, the distressed estate of the Church and Kingdome of England, and the dangerous estate of the Church and Kingdome of Scotland,

are present and publick Testimonies; We have now at last, (after other means of supplication, Remembrance, Protestations and sufferings) for the preservation of our selves and our Religion from utter ruine and destruction, according to the commendable practise of these Kingdomes in former times, and the example of Gods People in other Nations; after mature deliberation resolved and determined to enter into a mutual and solemn League and Covenant, wherein we all subscribe, and each one of us for himself with our hands lifted up to the most High God, do swear.

And because these Kingdoms are guilty of many sins and provocations against God, and his Son Jesus Christ, as is too manifest by our present distresses and dangers the fruits thereof; We profess and declare before God and the world, our unsained desire to be humbled for our own sins, and for the sins of these Kingdomes, especially that we have not as we ought, valued the inestimable benefit of the Gospel, that we have not laboured for the purity and power thereof, and that we have not endeavoured to receive Christ in our hearts, nor to walk warthly of him in our lives, which are the causes of other sins and transgressions so much abounding amongst us; And our true and unsained purpose, desire, and endeavour for our selves, and all others under our power and charge, both in publick and in private, in all duties we owe to God and Man, to amend our lives, and each one to go before another in the example of a real Reformation, that the Lord may turn away his wrath and heavy indignation, and establish these Churches
and

and Kingdoms in truth and peace. And this Cove-
 nant we make in the presence of Almighty God, the
 searcher of all hearts, with a true intention to per-
 form the same, as we shall answer at that great day,
 when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. Most
 humbly beseeching the Lord to strengthen us by his
 Holy Spirit for this end, and to bless our desires and
 proceedings with such success, as may be deliverance
 and safety to his people, and encouragement to other
 Christian Churches groaning under, or in danger of
 the yoke of Antichristian Tyranny, to joyn in the
 same, or like Association and Covenant, to the glory
 of God, the enlargement of the Kingdome of Jesus
 Christ, and the peace and tranquility of Christian
 Kingdomes and Commonwealths.

Bishop

Bishop HALLS Holy Order
OF THE
Mourners in S I O N.

FOrasmuch as there is no well-affected Christian, that is not deeply sensible of the woful calamity of this once glorious Church, now humbled into the dust of confusion, and exposed to the pity of all those foreign Neighbours, which heretofore blessed it as a singular pattern of Divine Mercy; and to the scorn and insultation of *Gath* and *Ascalon*: And for as much as it is, and hath been ever the practice of the Enemies of our peace, to range themselves into several Ranks and Files, under various Forms, Qualities, and Denominations; as on the one side, the Society of *Jesus*, the Order of the glorious Virgin, the *Archi-confraternity* of the most holy Trinity, and the rest of this kind not easie to be numbred: On the other side, Seekers, Quakers, Shakers, Dippers, the holy Family of Love, Ranters, and such other Prodiges of Mis-religion and Faction; and thereby have found advantage several wayes for the promoting of our ruine: Why should it not be found requisite, that we, the professed Servants of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, Orthodox and genuine Sons of the Church of *England* (whose hearts are moved by the good Spirit of God to a just resentment of our miseries and dangers) should firmly resolve (for the countermining of these Engines of Hell, and Conspirers of our destruction) to enter into a safe, warrantable, *Holy Fraternity of Mourners in Sion*; whose profession and work shall be a peculiarity of Devotion;

Devotion, stringing with fervent Prayers and Tears to obtain from Heaven a seasonable redresse of these our pressing Calamities, and a prevention of that utter overthrow and final Destruction, which threatens this miserable Church wherein we do yet live: And for this purpose may it be thought meet to tie ourselves by our secret and silent Vows to these Rules following.

1. That without all offensive, tumultuous and suspicious Complottings and Conventions, we shall hold up our private Devotions, and perform these our godly undertakings to that premised end.

2. That there shall be no superiority or subordination in this holy Fraternity, nor any soul more interested in it than other; and therefore no Formality or Ceremony of admittance into it, but a free and voluntary entrance, laid open for all comers into this strict course of Christian austerity; without any noise, without the required notice of any but God and their own Conscience, that the world may well see and know, that here is no other design, then merely spiritual; aiming at nothing but religious transactions between God and our Souls: and consisting in the performance of the unquestionable Exercises of Piety and holy Devotion.

3. That we shall zealously excite our Neighbours and Friends to be passionately affected with this sad Estate of Gods Church, and so be liberal of their sighs and tears, and prayers for the happy recovery of it.

4. That we will effectually endeavour to move our hearts to a sound Humiliation for our own sins, which have helped at contribution to the common stock of our miseries, and duty to our Vows of a more strict and holy obedience, and a more close walking with our God.

5. That we shall deeply take to heart and secretly mourn for, and lament the sins of our people, representing them in our thoughts in their true nature and quality, humbly begging for their serious repentance of them, and earnestly deprecating the judgments provoked by them.

6. That

69 That for this end we shall do our best endeavour to get just notice of the sad estate of this distracted Church of ours, and to be truly apprehensive of the peril wherein it stands; as also of the horrible blasphemies and damnable Heresies which have been of late disgorged from the mouth of Hell amongst us; and those hellish practices which have followed thereupon, to the high dishonour of the Majesty of that holy God whom we pretend to serve, to the utter shaming of that blessed Gospel which we profess for as much as we cannot mourn for what we know not, nor repent for what we do not know to be so manifestly sinful.

As of the sins, whereby we have moved the fierce anger and wrathfull displeasure of our God against us, so also shall we take full notice of the judgements; whereby we have smarted from his most just hand; yes (in a larger comprehension) of the judgements past, present, eminent; amongst which, how can we but sorrowfully reckon the mutual effusion of so much Christian blood, spilt by the hands of brethren, (and as the Tribes of *Israel* did for *Benjamin*) bitterly mourn for the slain of our people; of whom so many on both parts have been swept away from the earth, in the fury of a violent hostility, as might well have served to store a populous Nation, or might probably have overrun the professed enemies of Christendome: To these we cannot but add the wofull diseases and inexpressible miseries which do alway inevitably attend an intestine war.

But of all judgement, none have cause to make so deep an impression in us as the spiritual; as knowing that as our God is terrible in all his afflictions, so most of all where he is least felt; when he pays us in our own coin; when he punisheth us with our sins, making one in the revenge and execution of another; when he repays our actual rebellion against him with a senseless obduracy, with a plausible security and deadness of spirit. When he rewards our neglect and contempt of his Ordinances, with a long and to spiritual delusions, and to the seduction of the spirit of

error,

error, to prodigious whimsies, and spiritual blasphemies.

We shall then (as we have too just reason) lay together these evils that we feel; with those which we have no lesse cause to fear; and under the sense of both shall find our hearts pierced with sorrow, and resolved into the just tears of our mourning.

8. That we shall not fail both by night and day constantly to pour out our hearts in strong cries and fervent prayer to our God; that he will be pleased now at last to visit this miserable and desolate Church in mercy and compassion, and cause the light of his Countenance to shine upon us once again,

9. That the matter of our Prayers shall be the illumination and reduction of those our weak Brethren, which offend through ignorance, and out of a well-meant zeal and in the simplicity of their hearts miscarried into erroneous wayes; whether of doctrine or practise; for the merciful conversion of the not-obdured and wilful opposers of the Truth; for the seasonable confusion of the desperately malicious enemies of God and his Church; for the settling of the Church of God in righteousness, order and peace, for the prevalence and happy success of the Gospel against all Schism, Heresie, errors in Opinion, and wickedness of life; for the discovery and defeat of all the devices and machinations of Satan; and all his accursed Instruments, against the Church of Christ in all parts of the world, and especially in these disjoynted members of it, wherein we are interested; for the encouragement and prosperity of all those that are faithful in the Land, and that are hearty well-wishers to our State; for the averting of those heavy and desolatory judgements which our sins have thus long and loud called for; and lastly, for the making up of our deplorable breaches, and reuniting of all honest and faithful hearts in a firm concord and Christian love.

10. That we shall every week set apart one day for this holy purpose; wherein we shall humble our selves in private fasting and prayer, till it shall please our God to return to us

us in his wonted Compassion, and to put an end to these deadly distractions under which we labour.

11. That we shall willingly abridge our selves of our wonted pleasure; not giving our selves leave to enjoy any publick meetings of mirth and jollity; nor take the liberty of those lawful Recreations, which we have formerly made use of, whiles the Hand of God lies thus heavily upon this Church and Nation.

12. That it shall be the desire of our hearts, that all which shall condescend to joyn together in the profession of this holy Fraternity, be knit together in an entire affection to one another, and be ready to show all mutual respects of Christian love and observance to each other upon all occasions; being withall in all meekness of spirit charitably affected to, and lovingly conversing with those their Brethren and Neighbours, which are not yet so sensible of the just cause of their humiliation.

13. That in the conscience of our own wants and infirmities, we shall make it our care to spend our main censures upon our selves, and our own enormities: Not being apt to flie out upon the weaknesses and defects of our Brethren; bearing with those that are otherwise minded in matters of an inferiour nature, not aggravating the blame of those their Actions, or Opinions, which may be capable of a gentler and milder construction; and reserving the edge of our zeal for those foul and grosse offences, which carry open guilt in their faces, making head against them by all spiritual resistance and godly endeavours of Reclamation.

14. That whensoever we shall be called to deliver the Message of God to his people in publick Auditories, we shall not fail so lay open and bewail the sins of the time, and to rouze up our Hearers, with all zealous Exhortations, to a lively sense of just sorrow for the universal overflowing of wickedness, and to a vehement and godly striving against the stream thereof, by their prayers and utmost endeavours.

15. That

15. That we shall heartily labour not to be found defective in the use of all good means, whereby the peace and welfare of Gods Church may be procured and maintained; and shall carefully avoid all such wayes and meanes, which may in any sort endanger the widening of the unhappy breaches, and multiplying of the many and miserable distractions thereof.

These are the Laws, to which we have thought fit in these doleful times to bind our selves, in the presence of that God, who hath graciously wrought in us a feeling compassion of the publique evils; beseeching him, who is the Father of all mercies, to inable us by the powerful operation of his good Spirit, to an effectual performance of all these our holy engagements, that after the short time of our mourning in this vale of tears, we may be admitted to be the blessed partakers of that eternal joy which abides for all his in Heaven.

Christian Brethren, of what quality soever; I cannot fear, lest it will seem too much boldnesse in me to invite you all to take part with me in this holy Fraternity; which you shall highly wrong if you look upon it as mine, or any meerly humane institution: No, the Founder of it is in Heaven; it is the charge of the Holy Ghost himself, by the hand of his chosen Vessel, *Weep with them that weep*: If our tears therefore be (as they are) most just, ye are bound to add yours to them, and shall offend if ye forbear: Neither can you be ignorant that the Son of God himself while he was visibly here upon Earth, did not only own it as well-pleasing to him, but encouraged it with the promise of an assured comfort, and crowned it with no lesse title then Blessednesse: And if ye look for a more ancient precedent, even before the Lord of Life was manifested in the flesh, ye do apparently find this Fraternity of singular note in old Jerusalem, *To know the Man clothed with white Linnen, which had the Writers Inkborn by his side; had this charge from the mouth of the Lord himself, Go through the midst of the City, through the midst of Jerusalem, and see a mark upon*

the foreheads of the Men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that he done in the midst thereof. Lo here, a company of Mourners marked out for Mercy; even whilst the Sanctuary is contemptuously defiled, and all Jerusalem is in blood.

Shall I now need any other motive to win you into the Brotherhood of this sacred Order?

Know then, that they which sow in tears shall reap in joy; and he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with-rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Know that they are not Tears, but Pearles, that thus fall from your Eyes, dearly precious to the Almighty, and carefully reserved in his Casket, for the decking of your Souls to all Eternity.

Know that even the Lord of Glory was a man of sorrows, and that he bedewed Jerusalem with his Teares, ere he watered it with his Blood. If therefore ye will be moved either with the sweet and unfailable promises of a gracious acceptation, and a blessed remuneration of everlasting comfort; or led by the Precept, or the Example of that dear Saviour, whose Name ye profess to bear, refuse not, delay not to enter your selves into this so holy, ancient, and highly priviledged Fraternity of Mourners in Zion.

Mourn then, my Brethren, mourn heartily, but (as the Apostle in another case) *Mourn not as men without hope*, Be not disheartened. O ye faithful Mourners in Zion, as if ye were hopelessly condemned to a perpetual darkness, and were doomed to dwell under a Cloud of endless sorrow. The Almighty will find a time to have mercy upon his poor Church, and to clear up his countenance towards his chosen Ones; wiping all tears from their eyes, and all spots from their faces, and answering the holy desires of their hearts; in showing them his *Sion* in her perfect beauty. Could we but weep soundly, he would smile upon us, and comfortably shine upon his Sanctuar y, and make the place

place of his feet glorious, even an eternal excellency, the joy of many Generations: Indeed for the present, O our God, thou hast removed our Souls far from peace; thou hast most justly filled us with thine indignation; for we have deserved that thou shouldst pour out iniquities upon us; and shouldst bring upon us the fruits of our own thoughts, and measure our works into our bosomes; and cause us to drink at thy Hand the Cup of thy fury, yea, even to have the dregs of the Cup of trembling to be wrung out to us, for we have walked every one after the imagination of his own evil heart; our transgressions are with us, and are multiplied before thee; and though we have professed to be humbled under thy mighty hand, we have not cried to thee in our hearts, when we howled upon our beds; neither have we loathed our selves in our own sight for the evils that we have committed; so as we do now justly lie down in our thams, and our confusion covereth us, willingly acknowledging that our iniquities have most deservedly turned away thy blessings from us, and drawn thy judgements upon our heads.

But, O Lord, hast thou so smitten us, that there is no healing for us? Have we put our selves utterly out of the reach of thy boundlesse mercies? Art not thou the God that retainest not thine anger for ever, because thou delightest in mercy? Oh why shouldst thou then be to us as a mighty Man that cannot save? O thou the hope of *Israel*, and the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, return, return to thy people in the tender bowels of thine infinite pity and compassion; humble our Soules thoroughly under the sense of our many back slidings and grievous provocations of the Eyes of thy Glory: Oh strike thou our heart with an unfeigned repentance of all our evil wayes, and once again speak peace unto thy servants: Was there ever a more stiff-necked and rebellious people, O Lord, then thine *Israel*? more eminent in abused mercies? more notorious in all kinds of abominable wickednesses? more exercised with variety of judgements?

Yea

Yet when they cryed to thee in their distresse thou wert still ready to hear, and deliver them, and to renew thy so often forfeited blessings upon them, and wouldest not let loose thy vengeance upon them till there was no remedy. Behold, we are thy people, though a sinful one; a second *Israel* both for sins and mercies: Now, Lord, since it is thy marvellous mercy that we are not yet consumed, be still pleased to magnifie thy infinite goodnesse in thy gracious forbearances and our powerful conversion to thee: And though we cannot but confesse that we are a sinful Nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, yet, Lord, thou knowest that thou hast thy secret ones amongst us; a people that prayeth, and trembleth at thy judgements, and waiteth humbly at the door-posts of thy Sanctuary; a people that desireth to walk close with thee their God, and to be approved of thee in all their wayes; a people that sigheth and mourneth for the abominable sins of the Land of their Nativity: Oh, for their sakes, be thou intreated to hold off thy revenging hand from this sinful Nation, and even yet still provoke us by thy goodnesse to Repentance. O thou the righteous and merciful Judge of the world, *who even for ten righteous persons wouldest have spared a Sodom and Gomorrah from their fiery extinction*; be pleased tenderly to regard the cries of thy many hundred faithful and devout Soules, that sue to thee for the stay and removal of thy deserved judgements: Oh do thou look down from Heaven, and behold from the habitations of thy holiness and thy glory, the unfeigned humiliation of thy servants, who are prostrate before thee with fasting and weeping, and mourning; turn away thine heavy displeasure from us, and pity thy Sanctuary which is desolate; so shall our mouths be full of the praises of thy Name, and thy Saints shall rejoyce and sing new Songs unto the God of our Salvation.

In the mean time we shall in silence and hope wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from *Jacob*, and not cease

to pour out our selves in Tears and Supplications to him that is mighty to save; neither will we suffer our cheeks to be dry, or our souls to receive comfort, till we shall receive a gracious answer from Heaven; and shall see that the Lord hath been pleased to shew mercy to his *Sions*.

In this condition, we that are *Sions* Mourners shall not need to be distinguished (as other Orders are wont) by Colours, Devises, Abilliments. Our qualifications will be easily discerned by our sad faces, wet eyes, deep sighs, mortified carriage, willing neglect of those vanities wherewith others are transported, our holy retirednesse, assiduous Devotions, and strict professions of Godlineesse. Carry your selves thus, dear Brethren, and God and his Angels shall gladly welcome you into that holy Society of Mourners, which shall be marked out for preservation here, and for eternal comfort hereafter.

Lastly, let none of you discourage himself from entering into this sacred Fraternity, out of the sense of his bodily infirmity, or the urgent necessity of outward impediments. There is many an holy Soul that dwells inconveniently, in a crazy, tottering, ruinous Cottage, ready to drop down daily upon his head, not able to endure the subtraction of one Meales support: There are not a few well-affected Christians, whom the necessary exigences at their Calling and Estate, like so many hard Taskmasters hold close to their tale of Bricks, not allowing them the leisure of our limited Devotion. Let all these of both kinds know, that they have no cause hereupon, either to hold off, or to think they shall (in this case) need the dispensation of any superiour power; since their condition doth sufficiently dispense with it self. Even the severest Casuists of the *Roman Church* (who are wont to be the rigidest Exactors of the outward exercises of Mortification) do, in these Cases, allow of a just relaxation.

